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FULBRIGHT HOLDS C. I. A. BLAMELESS FOR U-2 INCIDENT

Senator Lays 'Questionable Decisions' to White House and State Department

PANEL HEARS DULLES

Arkansan Doubts President Should Have Assumed the Responsibility for Flight

By RUSSELL BAKER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 31.— Senator J. W. Fulbright absolved the Central Intelligence Agency today of responsibility for any of what he called the Administration's "questionable decisions" in the U-2 espionage plane incident.

The Arkansas Democrat, who is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said responsibility for such decisions appeared to rest with "political officers" at the State Department and the White House.

Mr. Fulbright summarized his views for reporters after an all-day committee session that heard secret testimony from Allen W. Dulles, the C. I. A. director. Although a transcript of the hearing was made, the committee left to Mr. Dulles the decision whether any of the testimony would be made public. Mr. Dulles indicated that the entire record would be suppressed.

C. I. A. Held Not at Issue

Senator Fulbright said that in his opinion the intelligence agency's activities were not at issue in the inquiry into the collapse of the Paris summit conference and events preceding it. In this, he was restating his conviction that "the black arts" of intelligence were an essential government operation.

As the focus of all United States intelligence operations, the agency has no policy-making function. Its job is to collect information and disseminate it to appropriate people within the Government.

Informed sources say that the agency had not assumed any policy-making function in the U-2 affair.

"What concerned me much more," he said, "were the policy decisions made outside of and I think without the participation of the C. I. A."

The most questionable of these decisions, he said, was for President Kennedy to accept responsibility for the espionage operation. "After the U-2 had been downed, he went to Khrushchev and the Ambassador had admitted that he had been given secret recommendations supporting

Soviet Agent Dispersed

Mr. Fulbright renewed his criticism that it was unprecedented for a head of state to take responsibility for his government's espionage operations, even though its agents were caught with full evidence against them. He noted that the Soviet Union had never accepted responsibility for any of its spies caught in the West.

The Senator drew a distinction, however, between the decision for the President to assume responsibility for the flight and the decision to admit that it had been a reconnaissance mission. In earlier statements, he has indicated that he saw little fault in admitting the nature of the flight as long as the Presidency was shielded from responsibility.

Secretary of State Christian A. Herter, in testimony Friday before the committee, said that the decision for the White House to accept full responsibility had been the President's own.

In his testimony today Mr. Dulles apparently confirmed that he had originally offered to assume full responsibility, but that the offer had been rejected at the White House. So far, there has been no testimony made public to indicate what advice, if any, the President had had from within the Administration about the wisdom of assuming responsibility.

Mr. Fulbright said he understood from today's testimony that Mr. Dulles did not consider it his function to give advice such questions. The Senator added that he was satisfied that Mr. Dulles had not participated in making this decision.

"I haven't yet seen anything that persuades me it was a wise decision," the Senator added.

Northern Spyrit Lauded

Although Mr. Herter's appearance Friday provoked some partisan bickering among the committee members, today's session with Mr. Dulles was apparently peaceful. Senator

more secretive agency, Dulles enjoys special immunity from Congressional inspection. Few Senators are permitted to know much of his operations, few are disposed to press more control over them. Some talks, much about his appearances before their committees.

Mr. Fulbright said Mr. Dulles had been "clear, concise and I think as candid as can be in his position and in answering" the committee's questions. Nevertheless, he noted, Mr. Dulles was not reluctant to answer the difficult ones, or to say where Government officials replied to certain questions.

One question on which he did not comment was what event was expected in the Soviet Union of such importance about May 1 that a U-2 detection flight was sent up sixteen days before the summit conference was to open.

The committee also questioned Mr. Dulles whether the U-2 program over the Soviet Union had been suspended during Premier Khrushchev's visit to the United States last fall. There are reports here that it was. But Mr. Fulbright declined to say what Mr. Dulles told the committee about it today.

Before today's hearing, the committee room was scanned with electronic detection equipment for possible eavesdropping devices. Gray blankets were hung against the doors to muffle sound.

Mr. Dulles read a long prepared statement, of which he had only one copy. Duplicates were not supplied for the senators.

Tomorrow the committee will hear Hugh L. Dryden, deputy Director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, who was in charge of the agency at the time the U-2 was downed. The senator may be involved when the C. I. A. "cover story" required the U-2 to report that the plane was a N. A. T. O. weather plane flying a meteorological mission along the Turkish-Soviet frontier.